

In Sai's Proximity



MADHAVRAO ADKAR

Dear Baban

Thus, Dasganu and Madhavrao met in the true sense of the word and became *Gurubandhu*.

Shri Dasganu had begun composing *lavanees* (erotic songs mainly sung in the Maharashtrian folk theatre called '*tamasha*') and *powadas* (songs describing heroic deeds of courageous persons from history) from a very young age, while Madhavrao was an expert singer, as well as an accomplished actor. Madhavrao was blessed with a sweet voice and good looks. Therefore, he became an excellent medium for popularizing the poetic contributions of Dasganu amongst common folk.

Besides complementing the talent of each other, they had certain other common interests. Both of them were religious minded and were equally immersed in the thoughts and worship of the Almighty. They were also not interested in worldly desires.

Dasganu had gauged the true liking of Madhavrao's mind. He, therefore, in 1897 (or there about) took him to Sai Baba. There, Madhavrao got what he was searching for all along and succeeded in getting peace of mind.

Madhavrao considered and honoured Dasganu as his elder brother. He showered love and affection on him. Dasganu reciprocated these feelings. He used to go to the extent of making Madhavrao sit for *pooja* and then garland him, wash his feet and drink the water considering it to be 'holy water', even touched his feet. Madhavrao used to get very much embarrassed by such gestures, but could not express his these feelings to Dasganu who used to affectionately call him 'Baban'.

Aarati Sai Baba

Whenever Madhavrao visited Shirdi, he stayed there for long periods of time. He sustained his living by taking private tuitions. He set his foot on the path towards Shirdi as soon as the thought struck him.

In 1903-04, he was in Shirdi, totally immersed in Baba's thought and suddenly a poem got composed in his mind. It was a poem devoted to Shri Sai Baba in the form of an *Aarati*. Dasganu was amazed and very happy with the song. But, Madhavrao thought nothing much of his creation and put the piece of paper in his pocket.

When both of them went to Baba, Baba realized that Madhavrao was trying to hide it and said, "Are, Madhava, why are you trying to hide the paper. Read it aloud !" On hearing it, Baba said, "Your this *Aarati* will look after welfare of the devotees."

Even today, we experience, how true are Baba's words...

Hemadpant has liberally showered praises on this *Aarati* in his 'Shri Sai Sat Charit'.

Ramjanma

Madhavrao's basic nature tended towards *Vairagya*. Therefore, he was very happy to spend his time in Shirdi and be near his *Sadguru* and was never keen on returning back to his wife and other family members.

His relatives searched for him everywhere, but to no avail. Ultimately, the search ended, when one Raghopant, who had spotted Madhavrao in Shirdi, conveyed the information to them. Madhavrao's father went to Shirdi and brought him back.

Baba had guessed this in advanced and told Madhavrao in Hindi that "Two persons riding horses are coming to take you back. You will have to go with them. Go ! I will be always with you in the form of the *Aarati*." When the riders arrived, Baba said, "Go with them immediately ! You will give birth to a son. Name him as 'Ram' ! Don't stay here anymore. Go with them !"

Against his own wishes, Madhavrao obeyed Baba's diktat and returned to his home and family life. In due course, a son was born and named as 'Ramchandra'.

Madhavrao also had a daughter. She was married to Shri Ropalekar of Pandharpur. But, like her mother, she also did not live long.

When Ramchandra's thread ceremony was performed, his father was the only close member of his immediate family who was present.

Intense desire

Whenever Madhavrao was not in Shirdi, he would be restless. His heart yearned to be there. On one such occasion, as the holy festival of Ram Navami was fast approaching, Madhavrao wanted to be in Shirdi as soon as possible. In reality, his health was not good. He was worried as to how he will manage the trip. Just then, two of his friends arrived and they took him with great care to Shirdi. This is how Baba used to know the utmost desires of His devotees and fulfil the same.

While Madhavrao was in Shirdi, he would experience that every moment Baba is looking after his welfare and wellbeing. Once, as per his routine, he wanted to go inside the *Masjid*. But, there was a huge crowd of devotees already waiting to enter and therefore, the guards were not allowing Madhavrao to enter first. Just then, Baba sent a message "Let Madhavrao come in !"

Try to imagine the feelings and joy of Madhavrao on hearing Baba's message !

Madhavrao's in-depth study

Because of the good deeds that he must have done in his earlier births, Madhavrao was fortunate to have a *Sadguru* like Shri Sai Baba. But, besides Shirdi, he used to repeatedly visit various places of pilgrimage such as Kashi, Rameshwar, Balaji, Gangapur, Narasobachi Wadi, Mahur, Tuljapur, Pandharpur and a host of others. Therefore, during these visits, he could be near great men like Gajanan Maharaj, Akkalkot Swami, Balbheem Maharaj, Sakhya Swami Dehukar, Vasakar, Vyankat Swami, Vinayakbua, Dada Maharaj and other saints and holy men. He received their blessings.

Madhavrao had a sweet voice and due to his in-depth study of various religious, historical and mythological topics, people loved his singing and rendering of *kirtans*, *bhajans* and *pravachans*.

Madhavrao could compose poems very quickly. However, he always bowed his head before the mastery of a great poet like Dasganu. He would make it a point to attend and listen to Dasganu's *kirtans*. He knew many of Dasganu's *kirtans* and poems by heart. We find a reference that while he was in Shirdi, Madhavrao once rendered Dasganu's *kirtan* on Shri Eknath Maharaj.

It was Dasganu's practice to recite 'Vishnu-sahasra-naam' 12 times every day. Seeing this, Madhavrao also began to follow the practice. He continued this till his demise. And even now, the practice is being followed by some members of his family.

Madhavrao made it a point to accompany Dasganu and attend the festival of Ram Navami every year till 1952.

Madhavrao was also adept in astrology. In his spare time, he used to draw horoscopes for various people who approached him.

Abundant letter writing

He loved to write letters. They had very little to say about family matters, but were filled mostly with spiritual advice and treatise. Very often, he reverentially referred to Dasganu in them. At the top of his letter, he wrote 'Shri Shankar' – as was the practice followed by Dasganu. It was also his practice to send a copy of his letters to his son – Shri Ramchandrapant, who would preserve them with great love and care.

A sizable amount of correspondence had been exchanged between him and particularly Dasganu. He also corresponded with other Sai devotees, such as Shri Saisharananand, Nanasahab Chandorkar, G. T. Karnik, Raobahadur Sathe, Tripathi and others. Most of these letters were initially in Marathi or Sanskrit, but later on in English and Urdu also.

Beautiful handwriting and

Mastery over various languages

Madhavrao was well versed in several languages, such as Sanskrit, *Modi*, English, Urdu, Parasi, Marathi, Telugu, Kannad, Gujarati and Hindi. The letters written by him in these languages are available with his progenies. His mastery on some of these languages could be gauged by the fact that there are glimpses of his poems in his writings.

In 1948, Madhavrao wrote a *pothi* in Sanskrit on the contemporary saint of Gujarat Shri Rangacharya Swami Maharaj. It is also a piece of art because of its design and

arrangement and Madhavrao's beautiful handwriting. It gives an impression that it is printed and not handwritten.

Similarly, he wrote in his own handwriting the entire 'Vishnu-sahasra-naam'. Dasganu was so happy with it that he sent Rs. 3 by money order to village Loni (where Madhavrao was located). When the two met, tears overflowed from eyes of both.

Once, Madhavrao was posted in a small village and a British officer came there to inspect the school. While talking to Madhavrao, he was impressed by his mastery over the English language. He immediately wrote a stern letter for 'posting such a learned man at such an obscure village'. The department replied that 'What you say is true, but our difficulty is that the gentleman does not stay at any one place for long !'

(Contd.)

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Translated from original Marathi into English by **Sudhir**



Back

Experiences of Sai Maharaj



(49)

1. How I became a Sai devotee !

I met Shri Maadaye Buva in the 'Sai Darbar' established by him at Kudal, Sawantwadi, in 1922. There is a huge picture of the ascetic and radiant Sai Baba there, which made me extremely happy. There I read a copy of Shri Sai Leela and my heart was filled with devotion. I kept wishing for a similar picture of Sai, as even a picture of a saint inspires your mind on the path of devotion.

In January 1924, I had to go to the Police Training School in Nasik for training. There I saw a picture of Sai Baba in the house of sub-inspector Dev (who was then training with me). When I requested him for a copy, he kindly gave me one.

2. Baba's Blessing

While in Nasik, I suffered from some stomach ailment, for which the doctor advised an operation. Hence, I took leave and left for Mumbai. On the station, I met Narayan, a Gujarati gentleman. When he came to know, why I was going to Mumbai, he said, "Postpone your operation for another 20 days. The planetary situation is ominous."

Later I read his name in Shri Sai Leela and learnt that he was a devotee of Baba. When I reached Mumbai, I inquired about the planetary situation as advised by him and came to know that it was indeed ominous for the next 20-25 days and could affect my life. So got myself operated 25 days later and was cured. As I was advised rest, I had to extend my leave and they removed me from the Nasik Police Training School. It was obvious that I would not be able to secure a sub-inspector's post. The medical costs and the bleak future were a constant source of worry. I kept thinking of Baba every day. Later, after I was completely cured, I reported to the deputy police commissioner. I had Sai's picture in my pocket. As I had been a sub-inspector earlier, he asked me some questions and appointed me as a sub-inspector once again. This was definitely Baba's blessing. This was in September, 1924.

3. The miraculous Udi

3-4 months later, I met Shri Hareram and Shri Dattadas Maadaye Buva. Shri Hareram is an ardent devotee of Sai Baba. Listening to his narration of Baba's *leelas* I was inspired to visit Sai's *Samadhi* in 1925. Since then, I have been visiting Shirdi every *Dassera* (Sai's *Punyatiithi*).

When my son Manohar was 18 months old, he was critically ill for four days. On the fourth day, he could not even open his eyes. That night, Shri Hareram visited us around 8.30 p.m. When he saw my son's dangerous condition, he took out some *Udi* and applied it on my son's forehead and stomach. After sitting a while, he took me with him to a *Satyanarayan Pooja* at his acquaintance's house. When I returned home at 11 p.m., I witnessed a miracle ! My son was busy playing like never before ! There was no trace of illness on his face. This was Baba's *leela* ! After that, all the people in my household started believing in the miraculous *Udi*.

In 1928, *Dassera* and *Muharram* were to be celebrated on the same day and it was impossible to get leave. I was bent on going to Shirdi. Two days prior to *Dassera*, I dreamt that

Baba was putting his signature on a paper. In the morning I applied for leave, which was granted immediately. I left for Shirdi with my family.

Everybody in my family had immense faith in Baba and invoked Him all the time. All problems, big and small were referred to Baba and they were alleviated. My son, then around two and a half years old, used to quickly pray in front of Baba's picture and apply *Udi*, whenever he hurt himself.

In 1927, there was a letter from the police commissioner discharging me from my duties as a sub-inspector to accommodate those who had completed their training in Nasik. Who else but Baba would take care of me? And He did! 3-4 days later I received a cancellation order, saying I would not be relieved from my post for the present.

4. Baba saved me in dangerous times

In February 1929, there were communal riots in Mumbai. Not only did we have no time to sleep, but sometimes we went without food too. That day I was posted on duty near a *Masjid* in Parel. I had not eaten the previous day and that day also could not get anything to eat. Around 3 in the afternoon I felt unwell and reported to my senior. He sent a British sub-inspector Priestley to relieve me. I went home. An hour later, I came to know that sub-inspector Priestley was killed by the rioters. I thank Sai for saving me in such dangerous times.

5. How Sai saved me from death !

Later, I fell ill and my illness was diagnosed as typhoid. Even though I was seriously ill, I kept invoking Baba and applied His *Udi* several times a day. One day my fever shot up and I was semi-conscious. A huge black figure approached my bed and started pulling me by the leg. Suddenly a divine figure appeared and saved me from his clutches. As they started fighting, I called out to Baba and immediately He appeared. He looked exactly like in the picture I had. There was a sweet scent pervading as also the scent of *sabja*. Sai's *leela* is great! As soon as He appeared, the black figure just vanished!

I woke up with a fright. It was 3 a.m. My fever started coming down. At that time my father was with me, but my mother was in our village, praying to Baba for my recovery. One night, Baba came in her dreams and said, "Do not be afraid. I will see that he comes home on leave." My leave was sanctioned and I soon went to my village. I returned to Mumbai after three months. A month later I was made permanent without undergoing any training at Nasik.

6. How Aaba Sawant's wife became a faithful devotee

My friend Aaba Sawant worshipped a picture of Sai in his house. When his wife came from the village for the first time, she said, "Why is this old Muslim's picture in our house?" Aaba tried to convince her about Baba's experiences, but she had no faith. A month later he bought a sari for his wife. "Today I got some money with Baba's grace, so bought this sari for you." But, his wife did not believe in Baba and said, "You got this from your own hard-earned money. How can you say Baba gave it?"

It was evening time. The sari was kept on a wooden chest. Later in the night when she went to examine the colour and feel of the sari, it turned to ashes as soon as she touched it. She felt very miserable and prayed that, if the very next day she got another sari, she would believe that God had punished her for having no faith.

The next day someone unexpectedly paid Rs.10/- to Aaba Sawant for some work done earlier. He was so happy that he bought another sari for his wife. When she saw it, her faith in Baba was restored and from that day onwards she started worshipping Him.

7. Baba saved my son from falling

We stay above the police station where I work. One day while I was working, I suddenly had the feeling that my three year old son had fallen down the stairs. I immediately went to the stairs and saw that my son was playing near the uppermost step. I was about to tell him to go home, when he slipped and would have fallen down eleven steps, had he not been gently caught in my out-stretched arms. By Baba's grace he was unhurt.

8. Dassera Darshan

Every Dassera I go to Shirdi with my family. In 1928, my family was in the village and hence I went alone. Actually, my wife had wanted to postpone her visit to the village as she wanted to visit Shirdi, but since she was unwell, I sent her to the village earlier. On Dassera day she dreamt of Baba and had *Darshan* exactly as in Shirdi. When a devotee fervently wishes for Baba's *Darshan* he gets it. There are many such examples.

9. "It's Baba's will !"

Last year some people were to visit Shirdi along with us. Since none of them had been to Shirdi earlier, we told them to meet us at Bori Bunder station. We reached the station, bought our tickets and took our seats. But, those people did not come. I searched for them all over the station. At last I saw them. They had to buy their tickets in a hurry as only seven minutes were left. We approached the third class doorway, but the ticket collector would not allow us to enter. We rushed to the other doorway, but there too only I was allowed. The others were disappointed, and one of them said, "It's Baba's will !"

Suddenly another passenger, who had at first beseeched the ticket collector to let him in, managed to hoodwink him and rushed inside. The ticket collector ran after him. Since the doorway was left open, we just managed to get into the train and it left. Is this not Baba's *leela* ?

The more we keep faith in God, the more He takes care of us.

Sadguru Sai does not discriminate between His devotees, but the essence is faith.

Nagesh Atmaram Sawant

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(Contd.)

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Back

f Sai Experiences *f*

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Sai Baba gives *Sakshat Darshan* and removes doubts from devotees mind !

I was once returning for a vacation to my home town at Shahjahanpur (Bareilly) during Dassera. This was the first time in my life when I was travelling such a long distance alone.

I had to change bus at Mathura; but when I reached there I was told that all the buses from Mathura to Bareilly had already left. As I didn't know what to do, I called my father; but he was not at home and was also informed that he had left his mobile at home.

I was left with the only option - to travel by train, when a ticket is booked the time of purchase gets printed on the ticket. I bought the ticket at 7.20 p.m. and mistook it to be the time of departure. I looked at my watch, it was 7.15 p.m., and I ran towards the platform and saw a train standing there. After enquiry, I came to know that the train was going to Bareilly and was about to leave, so I ran and caught the train.

I settled down and thanked Baba. But, it was cold and perhaps due to running around, I caught fever. I was shivering and suddenly a stranger appeared in the train, he was dirty and had tied a white cloth around his head, he came to me and asked me, "*Kuch paise de do*" (Give me some money) ! Shivering from fever and tired of running all the day, I got irritated and rebuked him; but ironically he simply smiled and went away. He did not ask money from anyone else, his behaviour seemed strange to me.

After about half an hour, my father returned home and called me. I told him that I was already in a train returning home comfortably. He was confused that how could I be travelling home; because there was no train from Mathura to Bareilly before 11.00 p.m. I was puzzled and I enquired from my co-passengers, whether the train was going to Bareilly. They replied in affirmative. I again called my father and said that the train was indeed headed for Bareilly !

On hearing this, my father enquired from Mathura railway station and came to know that this train started from that very day itself. He was thrilled and thanked Baba for all His *leelas* - the way I mistook the ticket purchasing time with train arrival time and how that train actually commenced from that very day ! But, the *leelas* don't end here.

My father started from Shahjahanpur for Bareilly to receive me; but in hurry, he sat in a wrong train. After a while, he realized this, he became anxious and got down at the next station. But, he came to know that there was no train for Bareilly from that station on that night. As I was travelling such a long distance for the first time, and to top it all I was running a temperature, he got even more worried. He immediately ran towards the bus stop and came to know that there was a strike that day and no public transport was working. So, he walked upto the bus station, only to know that they stop plying buses after 9.00 p.m. After all these futile efforts he was almost in tears.

He was informed that at night robbers lurked in that area, hearing this, my father started trembling with fear and started praying to Baba and Lord Hanuman. Suddenly, he saw a man driving a scooter approaching him. The first thought that crossed my father's mind was that he was a robber; but that the stranger approached my father and requested him to sit on the scooter. My father told me later that he doesn't know what came over him and how he acquiesced to the stranger. My father said nothing, but the stranger drove the scooter towards Bareilly. (Bareilly is not far from that town). After an hour, the scooter stopped and the stranger said that Bareilly railway station was close by. My father was all through the journey was in a semi-conscious state, so did not talk to that man, nor did he inform him where he wanted to go, so he was stunned, thinking how did the stranger know, where my father was going ! Before my father could say anything, the man said, "Deepak *tum mujhe bahut pareshaan karte ho*" (Deepak - my father's name - you disturb me very much) !, saying this, the stranger went away.

My father was dumbfounded, it was clear that Lord Sainath Himself had helped my father; my father did *sashtaang namaskar* (prostrated) on road itself. But, he was in confusion whether the strange man was Lord Hanuman or Lord Sainath ? While he was pondering, he saw a unkempt man with a white cloth tied round his head, who came to my father and asked for water. My father went to a nearby tap to fill his bottle; but when he returned there was no one there. He asked some people in the vicinity if they had seen a dirty man; but everyone denied seeing anyone of the description that my father gave.

Now, my father realized that Lord Sainath had come to clear his doubts, my father started crying seeing Baba's *leelas*. At the same time my train arrived at Bareilly and I met my father at the station. Later, when my father described the appearance of that dirty looking man, I had tears in my eyes, as the person who wanted some money from me in the train was none other than Sai Baba. I felt ashamed that I insulted my Baba instead of giving Him *dakshina*. I apologized in front of Baba's photo. My whole family had tears in their eyes.

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Shirdi Sai blesses

an atheist with a miracle !

I am an atheist from my childhood. I never felt the need for worshipping and having faith in God. I thought all my progress and good life was because of my atheism and rational thinking in life.

On 2nd November 1998 an incident gave birth to unshakable belief in Shri Shirdi Sai Baba. I felt His omnipresence.

I provide horse for wedding. On this fateful day I finished my work and was back home by 11.30 p.m. I had my dinner, spoke to my wife and son and went off to sleep. At

quarter past midnight my servant informed me that the horse had broken free of its halter and had runaway.

Immediately, I went in his search on my motorcycle. I searched for four hours; but in vain. I asked scores of people about the whereabouts of my horse; but drew a blank. I started panicking.

Then, out of sheer desperation, I don't know how, almost involuntarily, I prayed fervently to Shri Shirdi Sai Baba. I pleaded with Him and said that, "As You got back Chand Patil's horse, get back mine."

The moment I finished my impassioned appeal, I saw a man, clad in a simple white *dhoti*. I asked him about my runaway horse. He directed me to a bylane and said, "The horse is tied to a post in that lane." To my tense mind he appeared like an angel or messenger of God. At 3.00 a.m., I entered that deserted lane with some trepidation and hope beating in my heart. I reached the post the man had directed me to, and instantly my eyes filled with tears of joy and relief when I saw my horse there. The almighty has compassion for even atheists and non-believers like me. It did not matter to him that the person had been skeptic and had always doubted His powers, His manifestation, and even His very existence.

This incident is a turning point in my life, now I regularly visit Shri Sai Baba temple every Thursday and go to Shirdi every month. Now I fully acknowledge that all the progress and prosperity in my life is due to God – Sai.

- Veeru Sindhi

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Urge to see *Samadhi Mandir*

leads to miracle !

With Baba's blessing I would like to share how mysteriously Sai Baba came to me in the form of a beautiful laminated picture.

In 2004 January I came to U. S. A. to do my masters. I was daily doing evening *Aarati* to Baba's photo. This beautiful photo of Baba is not full size, it is only till knee. One day, while doing *Pooja*, I felt, I should have *Darshan* of Baba in *Samadhi Mandir*, i.e. I wanted to see Baba and His *Samadhi* like in Shirdi. I told Baba that the photo I have is very beautiful; but it does not have His full body image, I wanted to see Him and His *Samadhi*. I prayed thus and totally forgot about it.

After few days, I had to go to my previous room to collect something. As I entered the room, I saw it was strewn with dry leaves, cockroaches and dust. I entered my room and collected my things and was about to leave the room, but felt curious to check my roommate's room too.

As I entered his room, I saw a beautiful laminated picture of Baba with *Samadhi* in the cupboard. I had goose bumps, I was moved by the beautiful picture, Baba was all smiling and looked very handsome. I removed my shoes and prayed to Baba saying that 'nobody is here to take care of You; if You come to my room I would take care of You.'

I had a strong urge of taking the picture with me, but felt it akin to theft; so I thought, I should ask my roommate's permission to take it. I was afraid to ask my roommate, I felt, being a Sai devotee himself, if he sees this beautiful picture, he might keep it to himself. I left it to Baba to decide and asked my roommate, he was surprised to hear that there is a picture of Baba in his room; he promised me that he will check and will let me know.

I had no hopes that I will get the picture. Following Thursday he met me and asked me to take the picture, he said, he never had that kind of photo, nor any of his friends had left it there. He was himself surprised as to how that photo came there.

I felt happy that Baba has indeed blessed me and came to me in such a mysterious way.

I would like to thank Baba for allowing me to share His *leela* with all Sai devotees.

- Mithun

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m m m

Baba showed the path

in pitch-black dark...

I was once returning with my family from Lake Land Country Club at around 10 p.m. I was on Kona Expressway, it was totally dark, with no street light and open stretches of fields on both the sides. Suddenly, a car started honking from behind, and in a short while it overtook our car. In a short while we realised that the driver of the other car was asking us to stop, when we did, he informed us that our car's one tyre had punctured.

I was instantly seized with fear, as my wife and children were with me; the battery of my mobile was completely discharged; so there was no way I could call for help, besides, there was not a soul in sight to help. I also recalled that, that area was infested with robbers.

I started praying to Sai Baba. I told my family that I was going out of the car to seek help, and told them not to open the doors of the car, whatever, the reason be. I began to walk in the dark. It was eerie, with not a soul in sight, fear gripping me; I was earnestly besieging Baba to miraculously come to my aid.

After sometime, I noticed a light coming from a distance, as I hastened my step, I saw a small shop. I started running, when I reached the shop I asked the shopkeeper, if he had a phone or mobile, to which he replied 'no'. I asked him, if there was a garage nearby, to which he again said 'no'. I explained to him my problem and informed me that in the vicinity, there is a boy who knew how to repair cars.

As per his directions, I located the boy and explained to him my predicament, the boy agreed to come with me. In the dead of night, he changed the tyre. When I asked

him, how much I should pay him, he said, “Rs. 20.”

I sincerely believe that there is some sanity left in the world because of such kind souls. I pray to Baba to bestow on the young lad all the happiness in the world.

- Aditya Vikram

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m m m

Udi miracle in Bahrain !

Sai Baba has myriad ways of showing His love.

Out of the innumerable experiences of His mercy, I am narrating one, which is the closest to my heart.

After my husband’s surgery in June 2005 life was never the same. My husband underwent a surgery for brain tumour and by the grace of God, it was removed. But, our life was a rollercoaster ride thenceforth; the doctors told my husband that he had to depend on steroids and hormone replacement injections throughout his life.

Each day is a blessing and I thank God for blessing us with more days, where we experience His Grace.

We stay in Bahrain and the school vacations fall in August, so during one such vacation in 2007, our two children, in between watching television, reading books, indulging in art work, getting in a brawl were also getting bored. It was during this time, that my neighbour and her sister-in-law, who was visiting her (neighbour) visited us.

Both of them are dedicated teachers at the Chinmay Mission, and seeing the children twiddling the thumbs at home, they in unison said, “Why you don’t send the kids to our home, we would teach them small *bhajans* ?” I was only too delighted to hear their suggestion, as not only would my children learn some *bhajans*, but they would also be kept busy.

After they came home from their *bhajan* class, I would ask them to sing what they had learnt and when they sang, the beautiful verses that came from their mouth, tempted me to learn those songs and I put forth my request to both the aunt’s (that is how I addressed them). Both of them were thrilled to hear this request and invited me over to learn the *bhajans*. After two days, the visiting aunt realised that I could be taught lengthier songs, so she told to come in the morning and scheduled the children for noon. Soon, we were four ladies going to this aunt to learn *abhangs* (devotional songs in Marathi, which have been composed by great saints of yore).

For my troubled and worried mind, this proved to be a wonderful diversion and each day I would finish my household chores as fast as I could, so that I would not miss my class. After a few days, the visiting aunt voiced to us, that she wished to hold a ‘*kacheri*’ (a concert) in the temple. I skeptically told her, “*Aunty, humhare aise naseeb kahan jo Bhagwan ke saamne kacheri karein !*” (Where are we so fortunate to hold a concert in the presence of God !) But, aunty was very positive that we would get the opportunity to sing in the temple.

Around this time, once again fate had plans of her own ! My husband started complaining of pain in his left foot and soon we realised that there was some kind of a

lump which seemed to be growing bigger by the day. Upon doing a sonography the doctors advised him to undergo a surgery for the same. But, because his sugar levels were high, the doctors advised him to first try to bring his sugar under control, as due to high sugar levels the healing process would take a long time. I started giving him a massage on that foot every day as it hurt him. The pain was so intense that he could not sleep; even the touch of shoe would stir pain.

During this time, we had heard that a miracle had taken place in a Sai devotee's home, where 'Udi' had started trickling from a framed photograph of Baba. My skeptical mind did not want to accept this, I thought, "This can't be true; in all probability the photograph inside the frame may be old and the paper must be crumbling or probably the wall which was holding the photograph must be old and the plaster must be peeling, etc."; but what I saw with my own eyes, was hard for me to believe or digest. I could see the ash coloured 'Udi' stuck to the feet of Baba and at the base of photograph and the stand which held the photograph had a small mountain of the 'Udi'. Our teacher as if on cue, asked us to start singing one of the *abhangs* taught to us by her. The other ladies and our teacher began singing; but I was so choked and overwhelmed, that no words would come out of my mouth and the only offering I could offer to Baba for showing me this miracle, were tears ! Tears flowed down my eyes, without any restraint, it felt as if my eyes were saying 'sorry' to Baba for having distrusted His miracle !

All of us assembled there were given a small pinch of the 'Udi' and when I got my share, I was left wondering, 'how will this small amount suffice for my family'. And yet, I could not ask for more, as I also knew that I was not the only devotee of Baba who would come to seek His blessings or partake of the 'Udi'.

I went home and applied the 'Udi' on my husband's forehead and on the scar where he had been operated for his brain tumour. A little of the 'Udi' which was left on my finger tip, I sprinkled into his coffee and yet, there was a residue of the 'Udi' left on my fingertip, saying "**Om Shri Sainathay Namaha**", I rubbed the residue on the lump that was growing on his left foot. In the evening after applying 'Udi' on my children's forehead, once again, I applied the residue on my husband's foot. I did this religiously till all the 'Udi' got over.

I received some more 'Udi', and I again followed my ritual to the T. A week passed and both my husband and I forgot all about the foot, he stopped complaining about the pain in his foot and because of that it slipped my mind to ask him how his foot was. Suddenly, one day, a fortnight, after I had finished applying the last of the 'Udi', I remembered the pain in my husband's foot and asked him, "Hey ! Subhash ! I forgot to ask you, how is the pain in your foot ?" That is when with a start we both looked at his left foot. What we both saw, was something our eyes could not believe, the lump was no longer there ! Both of us examined his foot closely; but the lump had vanished. A miracle had happened ! Where a surgery had been advised, Baba worked on it through His 'Udi' !

I am sure Baba is also working on my husband's health condition. I believe that he will not have to rely or depend on external medicines to enable the smooth and normal functioning on his body. With this *Shraddha* in my heart and the *Saburi* in my mind, I keep praying to Baba to work His miracle !!

Om Shri Sainathay Namaha !

- Mrs. Shilpa Shenoy

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Saileela

The life story of Sai is like a vast ocean - endless, inexhaustible, full of jewels...

Why should we do Shri Sai Baba's Devotion – Eleven Reasons

He grants whatever anyone asks. This is His creed. Therefore, I say, make haste. Take Sai's *Darshan*. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 13 – Verse 60)

“Any one of you, wherever you are, whenever you come to me, with your hand outstretched, with devotion, I am there to respond to your faith, day and night.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 15 – Verse 67)

“You should regard me as the whole and sole. I will also regard you in the same way. My *Guru* did not teach me anything else at all.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 19 – Verse 73)

“Even when I pass away, believe in my words. From my tomb my bones will give you assurance.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 25 – Verse 105)

How can he, who is himself devoid of self-realisation, give it to the disciple ? He does not deserve to be called a *Sadguru* who has no practical knowledge whatsoever. Know that he is the *Sadguru* who does not, even in his dream, expect any service or profit from his disciple. On the contrary, he wishes to serve the disciple. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48 – Verses 9-10)

One needs no more than two hands and a head to show gratefulness to Sainath, if it is done with a steady mind and faith in Him alone to the exclusion of all others. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 13 – Verse 180)

“I need no conveyance – a carriage, or a horse, a plane or a train. I appear without an instant's delay, when I am lovingly called.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 40 – Verse 32)

If this *Udi* is applied to the body, then physical and mental sufferings are cured... (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 33 – Verse 16)

Besides, the real importance of this *Udi* is that he who takes it will have a full life and his sins will be completely destroyed. He will enjoy bliss and contentment always. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 33 – Verse 235)

It is not just a book, but a wish-fulfilling tree, which the people engrossed in mundane existence find barren, but for the seekers of liberation it gives only the actual experience of liberation. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 53 – Verse 171)

Abandoning all the million clever and cunning ways, recall always “Sai, Sai”. You will be able to cross the worldly ocean. Have no doubts. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 10 – Verse 135)

“He, who constantly remembers me after completely surrendering to me, I owe him a debt which I will repay by uplifting him.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 44 – Verse 151)

Phalasruti of Recitation of Shri Sai Sat Charita...

“If you listen to my stories, recite them and meditate upon them, devotion for me will arise and ignorance will be completely destroyed.” (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 2 – Verse 82)

“Whoever sings with feelings of my life, eulogises my powers, virtues and excellences, I will protect him totally, by surrounding him. Whoever sings my praises, I will bestow upon him complete happiness, permanent pleasure and contentment. Believe this as the Truth. From the very jaws of death I will snatch away my devotees. Just by listening to my stories diseases will disappear. Listen to the story with due reverence, meditate fully upon it, intently contemplate upon it and you will attain peace. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 3 – Verses 12, 14, 17-18)

Performing *Yoga* and sacrifices, practicing meditation and concentration requires great efforts, whereas listening to these tales requires no efforts other than attentiveness. Let the devout and virtuous listeners listen to this pure story of Sai, by which they will be benefitted; because the powerful five sins will be burnt completely. Even if one is engrossed in worldly affairs and one chances to hear the tales of a saint, without making the slightest efforts, they will still do good because such is their nature. Then if they are listened to with faith and devotion, how much good can be gained ! Oh ! Listeners, just think, in your own interest. You do not need ceremonies to complete the rituals, you do not need fasting to torture the body; you do not need to visit the *Tirthas*. It is sufficient to listen to the story. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 3 – Verses 57-58, 152-153, 182)

Whosoever reads this chapter regularly, with faith and devotion, all the problems will be resolved after the completion of the reading with concentration. Attain the unattainable ! Ultimately become desireless ! Attain the difficult four-fold *Mukti* and uninterrupted peace. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 11 – Verses 150, 152)

This narrative is sacred and purifying like the holy water of the Ganges. Blessed are the ears of the listeners for they become the means to gain good now and hereafter. Let us compare it with nectar. But, nectar cannot be sweeter than this. Nectar will save the life, but this story will give freedom from the cycle of birth and death. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 13 – Verses 21-22)

If these stories are regularly heard, Sai’s image will perpetually remain before our eyes, our minds and our hearts; and we will remember Him and meditate upon Him day and night. One would perceive Him while waking or dreaming; while sitting, resting or eating. Wherever one goes about, either in society or in the jungle, He would seem to be walking beside him. If thus He is with us day and night, one would be absorbed in divine contemplation; and when this happens every day, the mind will be one with the supreme energy. This not a story, but a treasure trove of joy. It is the best, nectar like sweet meat for one’s self, which should be enjoyed with faith and devotion, by one who is exceptionally happy. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 14 – Verses 32 to 34, 215)

Listening to these stories from the mouth of the *Guru* will eradicate the troubles and anxieties pertaining to the world. Bliss will be born in the minds of the listeners and knowledge of the soul will dawn upon them. Whoever reads this chapter with respect, or recites it a fixed number of times regularly, will find his difficulties warded off by *Gururaya*. Bear it well in your mind. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 15 – Verses 10, 105)

By listening to His life story, sins will be destroyed. By listening to His life story, destiny will be fought. By listening to His life story, supreme happiness will be achieved effortlessly by the listeners. A person may be intelligent or a dullard. If he reads this, he would feel great joy. Listening to it, he will wish to listen to it more and more. Meditating on it, it will give contentment and bliss. If a person recites it over and over again, its divine meaning will manifest itself. If he tries to meditate on it every day, he will have great pleasure and permanent happiness, without obstacles. Such is His unfathomable *Leela* ! (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 17 – Verses 108, 159-160)

Just as darkness is dispelled when the sun arises, similarly by partaking the nectar in the form of these stories, illusion will disappear. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 20 – Verse 134)

The path of the Sat Charita is simple. Wherever it is read, it becomes Dwarkamai and Sai definitely appears there. There itself are the banks of the Godavari; there itself is the nearby pilgrimage place of Shirdi; there itself is Sai together with the *Dhuni* who removes all difficulties, as soon as He is remembered. Where the Sai Charita is regularly recited, Sai resides there always. If the 'Charita' is repeatedly read with full faith, it pleases Him, in all respects. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 35 – Verses 218 to 220)

Read this biography regularly at any time of the day. Shri Hari together with your *Gururaj*, will certainly meet His devotee. Goddess Lakshmi will permanently abide in the home where it is read regularly. At least if one week's reading of the whole book is done, poverty will be driven away. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 37 – Verses 96-97)

Whoever listens to this story, with concentration after bowing at Sai's Feet, will find it most auspicious and supremely purifying. The devotee who is possessed of real devotion and has his self interest at heart will savour the nectar of this story with concentrated mind. Service never goes unrewarded. Sai will fulfil his aims and objects, be it for worldly gains or spiritual, and ultimately help in accomplishing life's desires. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 45 – Verses 13 to 15)

Listening to the Sai Charita purifies the listeners and the narrator always. The merits and the sins are obliterated and both attain salvation. The listeners who hear it are most fortunate; and so is the narrator. Blessed is the Shri Sai *Stotra* and it is very purifying for His devotees. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 48 – Verses 32-33)

There is no better means for breaking the bondage of this world. The story of Sai is very purifying and savouring it always gives happiness. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 49 – Verse 25)

So be it. Now it occurs to me to ask a boon from Him, by holding on to His Feet on behalf of all the devotees. I pray that this book reaches every home and is read and recited regularly; that it is lovingly repeated ritually; and that it removes their difficulties. Whosoever reads this book within seven consecutive days, with love and faith, after proper ablutions, his calamities will be removed. Listening to this Satcharita or reciting it regularly will result in the Feet of Sai Samartha removing all the difficulties without any delay. Those desiring wealth will get it; those who are upright in their conduct and dealings will have complete renown. The results will depend upon their faith. Without devotion, you will not have the experience. Reading the book with reverence, Sai Samartha is propitiated. He destroys ignorance and poverty and grants knowledge and untold prosperity. One should make it a practice to read at least one chapter of this Satcharita every day, with a calm and concentrated mind. It will bring immeasurable joy and happiness. One who desires his own welfare should really read this book. He will be obliged by Sai, through all the cycles of life and he will remember Sai with overwhelming joy in birth after birth. The book should definitely be read at one's own home at Sai's festivals, such as *Gurupoornima*, *Gokul Ashtami*, *Punyatithi* and *Ramnavami*. All one's desires will be fulfilled by reading such a book from beginning to end; and by holding the Feet of the *Sadguru* close to the heart one will cross the ocean of worldly existence. The sick will become healthy; the impoverished will become rich; quietude of mind will be gained by people suffering from indecision; and even the destitute will become generous. Repeated reading of the book will exorcise demons and cure epilepsy. Listening to it will be beneficial for the dumb, blind, handicapped and the deaf. Even those who have forgotten the almighty Lord, lured by ignorance, will be uplifted. Even those will be uplifted who, though human behave like demons and waste their bodies in vain, believing this worldly existence to be a mine of happiness. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 52 – Verses 42 to 44, 47 to 49, 51 to 53, 83 to 87)

Lord Sai will be gratified thereby, and He will bless the devotee. The snake in the form of the worldly existence will be destroyed and the treasure of liberation will be revealed to him. (Shri Sai Sat Charita, Chapter 53 – Verse 195)

“You may ask, where I am now and how can meet you now ? But, I am within your heart and we can meet without any effort.

You may ask, who is in the heart and how ? What are his attributes ? And, what is his identity, by which he can be recognised ?

Then, be completely attentive. Listen to the clear description, to whom one should surrender, and who is the dweller in the heart.

The creation is filled in plenty with objects of different names and forms, which no one has been able to count. They are all the forms of Maya.

In the same way, indeed, that throbbing of reality, which goes beyond the three aspects viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, is really the form of the One embedded in the heart.

That state of being without names and forms, which remains as the essence of your own, is really the indication of that One, embedded in the heart. Knowing this, seek refuge in Him.

One has to appreciate that, I alone am ‘He and Thou’. On extending this very idea of identity in the world of beings, there appears the weighty essence of one’s own Self. There is no room for anything or anyone besides myself.

With continuous practice, you will experience my all-pervasiveness. Then, you will become one with me and experience, that there is nothing beyond me.

You will be one with the Supreme Spirit and your heart will be pure. Without even having the waters of the Ganges, you will have had a Ganga bath (that is, you will be purified).

The wise are ever wary of the bondage of the pride of the worldly achievements and do not let it affect them.

One who meditates upon his Real Self, unwaveringly and does not break his concentration for him, there is no necessity of both - getting into *Samadhi* or coming out of it.”

- Shri Sai Baba from Shri Sai Sat Charita